

Baby Steps: Quality Infant/Toddler Care Project

Project Overview 2007 - 2008

Eligibility

Initial Eligibility

- Licensed and licensed exempt, full time child care centers with infant and/or toddler rooms dedicated exclusively to children under the age of 2 years are eligible.
- Centers holding an Hourly Child Care license or providing child care in resort or gym/spa settings are not eligible.
- Centers that have been suspended from grant eligibility by the Office of Child Care are not eligible for the duration of the suspension.

To remain eligible in future years, centers must:

- Meet the annual staff training goals
- Fulfill their quality improvement goals, raising their score on the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ITERS-R) by at least ½ point.
- If centers do not meet these goals by the end of each year, they will not be eligible to reapply for one year. They will need to have met all of the original goals before reapplying.

What participants will receive

- Centers may receive up to \$9,999.00 per year based on the following:
- Centers will receive a \$1200.00 grant for each group of four infants/toddlers. Actual payments are based on the daily attendance in three designated month
- For Fiscal Year 2008 only (2007-2008), centers will also receive \$500.00 per group of four children for the purchase of materials and equipment.
- Each program will receive \$330.00 for each group of 8 children to cover the cost of wages paid to the caregivers while they attend the required Infant/Toddler Endorsement classes.

Required quality improvement activities

- Training: Each center director must complete the Infant/Toddler Endorsement within the first year of participation. At least one infant/toddler caregiver per group of children must also complete the Infant/Toddler Endorsement classes. Caregivers must take at least one course per quarter until all four courses are complete. The endorsement consists of forty hours of class time, with four 10-hour courses.
 - If a caregiver leaves the program, the caregiver who replaces her must begin attending the first available course.
 - The classes are offered through the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) throughout the state. The courses can be taken in any order and staff may be able to attend classes taught by CCR&Rs outside their geographical area. (It may be necessary to take classes during the summer. You should check with your R&R immediately for information on their training schedule.)

- All staff that complete the Infant Toddler Endorsement are eligible for a \$100.00 award through the Career Ladder program.
- Centers are required to pay caregivers for class attendance based on their usual wage.
- In the Metro and Northern regions, special arrangements are made to reserve space in the classes for Baby Steps participants. Only staff that are required by the project to complete the endorsement should take advantage of the special arrangements. If you do not know your CCR&Rs process for enrolling in classes, please contact them. Only the director and ONE caregiver per room are required to obtain the endorsement. All other staff are welcome to sign up for these classes if there are openings.
- Failure to complete the endorsement classes according to the policies listed above will make the center INELIGIBLE for at least one year. To reenter the program, the training would need to be completed by the director and caregivers.
- Observations: The Infant/Toddler Specialists will usually complete an annual observation using the ITERS-R in each participating classroom.
 - A three to four hour observation is required to complete the assessment.
 - After the observation, the Specialist will discuss the results with center staff.
- Quality Improvement Goals: Goals are set based on input from the staff and the results of the ITERS-R observation.
 - A goal is chosen for each of the seven sub-scale of the ITERS-R.
 - The Infant/Toddler Specialist helps develop a plan to meet your goals.
 - Goals are listed on the Work Plan and submitted with the Baby Steps application.
 - Progress is reported on the Work Plan or Progress Report each time an invoice for payment is submitted.
- Approved uses for grant funds:
 - Equipment Purchases: For Fiscal Year 2008, the funds for equipment and materials will be issued in July, at the beginning of the grant period. **Purchases must be made and receipts submitted by October 31, 2007.**
 - Participants may use the remainder of the grant to pay for infant/toddler caregiver salaries, benefits and class fees, and the portion of the mortgage/lease/utilities assessed to the infant/toddler classrooms.
- Documentation: Centers must maintain the following documentation at the center for review by Office of Child Care or other DWS staff.
 - Copies of the Work Plan with progress notes or the Progress Report form.
 - Attendance records for the target month to support the Average Daily Attendance figure.
 - Sign-in and out sheets or computer reports for the target months.
 - Pay stubs or other documentation showing that staff has been paid for time spent in infant/toddler endorsement classes.

Invoice Process

Invoices will be submitted three times a year and payments are based on the Average Daily Attendance of designated months.

- Invoices are submitted according to the schedule below.
- When you send the invoice, you must enclose the following:
 - Invoice
 - Training Report
 - Attendance Record for the target month
 - Documentation of staff wages if they attended training.
- Late invoices may not be processed until the next deadline.

Outside Assessments

The Office of Child Care will complete an ITERS-R's in each participating classroom during each year of the project.

- Centers will be notified in advance of all observations for the ITERS-R.
- In addition to helping you set solid quality improvement goals, these ITERS-R's assess the effectiveness of the Baby Steps Project in increasing the quality of care in participating centers and provide the office with required financial and audit information.
- These observations may also be used to train new Consultants and/or to complete reliability checks.

Audit Controls

To fulfill requirements placed on our office by state and federal auditors, attendance records may be matched to sign in/out sheets or computer records to check for accuracy of the Average Daily Attendance figures.

- These records must be available on site for review.
- Appointments may or may not be made in advance.

Invoice and other Due Dates

First Invoice	Receipts Due	Second Invoice	QI Goals Met	Third Invoice
Due October 15, 2007	October 31, 2007	Due February 15, 2008	December 31, 2007	Due May 15, 2008
<u>Based on September attendance</u>		Based on January attendance		Based on April attendance